

of the deities of the Romans, who was said to preside over the gates of Heaven,—and was selected by Numa Pompilius (when he added January and February to the months of his immediate predecessor Romulus), as a deity possessed of qualifications peculiarly adapted for presiding over the year, not only on account of the knowledge he was thought to possess of the past, but more especially for his presumed power of foresight. Towards the end of this month a few flowers begin to blossom, if the weather be mild, among the first the

SNOWDROP

lifts its head; as the dove was sent forth from the ark to ascertain whether the waters were abated, so does the Snowdrop seem selected by Flora to find whether the frost be mitigated, and as a herald to announce the approach of spring. The botanical name of this plant is *Galanthus nivalis*; it belongs to the Linnæan class hexandria, having six stamens, and order monogynia, one pistil.—In the natural order or system of Jussieu it is placed in the family Amaryllidæ; and upon examination the *corolla*, or blossom, as it is usually termed, will be found to consist of six pieces; the three outer ones spreading, and the three inner smaller, upright, margined, and springing from a sheath.

THE SNOWDROP.

"Winter's gloomy night withdrawn,
Lo the young romantic hours,
Search the hills, the dale, the lawn,
To behold the Snowdrop white
Start to light,
And shine in Flora's desert bowers
Beneath the vernal dawn,
The morning star of flowers."

MONTGOMERY.

As the earliest blossom that expands, the Snowdrop claims our first regard; and countless are the lays in which the praises of this little modest flower are sung.

"Like pendant flakes of vegetating snow,
The early herald of the infant year:
Ere yet the adventurous crocus dares to blow,
Beneath the orchard boughs thy buds appear."

Lovely indeed is this flower in itself, and its English name signifies the intense whiteness that belongs to it.—Lovely is it in its drooping blossom and unsullied purity.—Lovely, too, in its early appearance. This firstling of the year is like the feelings of youth, gentle and pure, and heedless of clouds and storms.

"Mild offspring of a dark and sullen sire,
Whose modest form, so delicately fine,
Was nursed in whirling storms,
And cradled by the winds."

This flower, so simply elegant, and so welcome as the earliest harbinger of brighter days, springs up as it were heedless of all obstacles; year after